

Notice of Objection Period for the Darby Lumber Lands – Phase II Project

The *Draft* Decision Notice (DN) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the Darby Lumber Lands – Phase II Project are now available. The project is located on the Darby Ranger District of the Bitterroot National Forest. The project area is located in Rye Creek, Little Sleeping Child Creek, Harlan Creek, Roan Gulch, Burke Gulch, North Fork Rye Creek, and Robbins Gulch drainages in the Sapphire Mountain Range, east of Darby, Montana. The Responsible Official for the project is the Bitterroot National Forest Supervisor.

The selected alternative would improve watershed condition through management of the transportation system, including BMP upgrades and road decommissioning and storage. The selected alternative would also create motorized recreation opportunities through the construction of OHV trails, creating loop routes in the project area.

The selected alternative includes vegetation management through commercial harvest, non-commercial thinning and prescribed burning. There would also be construction of system and temporary roads needed to complete vegetation management activities. Temporary roads would be revegetated after use.

The selected alternative would also approve a site-specific Forest Plan amendment to plan standards for thermal cover and allowing portions of third-order drainages within the project area to be managed at Elk Habitat Effectiveness values less than the plan standards.

The *Draft* DN and FONSI are available at: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=49700> or at the Darby Ranger District and Forest Supervisor's Office. Additional information can be obtained from: Amy Fox, Interdisciplinary Team Leader, 1801 N. First St., Hamilton, MT 59840 or 406-363-7120.

How to file an Objection and Timeframe

The Darby Lumber Lands – Phase II Project is subject to the objection process pursuant to 36 CFR 218, subparts A and B. Objections will only be accepted from those who have previously submitted specific written comments regarding the proposed project during scoping or other designated opportunity for public comment in accordance with §218.5(a). Issues raised in objections must be based on previously submitted timely, specific written comments regarding the proposed project unless based on new information arising after the designated comment opportunities.

Objections, including attachments, must be filed via mail, express delivery, or messenger service to: Objection Reviewing Officer, USDA Forest Service, Northern Region, 26 Fort Missoula Road, Missoula, MT 59804; FAX to (406) 329-3411; email to appeals-northern-regional-office@fs.fed.us; or by hand-delivery (Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., excluding holidays at USDA Forest Service, 26 Fort Missoula Road, Missoula, MT 59804).

Objections must be submitted within 45 calendar days following the publication of this notice in the Ravalli Republic. The publication date in the newspaper of record is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an objection. Those wishing to object should not rely upon dates or

timeframe information provided by any other source. The regulations prohibit extending the time to file an objection.

The objection must contain the minimum content requirements specified in §218.8(d) and incorporation of documents by reference is permitted only as provided in §218.8(b). It is the objector's responsibility to ensure timely filing of a written objection with the reviewing officer pursuant to §218.9. All objections are available for public inspection during and after the objection process. Names and contact information (including addresses and e-mail addresses) submitted with objections will become part of the public record and may be released under the Freedom of Information Act.

At a minimum an objection must include the following (36 CFR 218.8(d)): 1) The objector's name and address, with a telephone number, if available; 2) a signature or other verification of authorship upon request (a scanned signature for Email may be filed with the objection); 3) when multiple names are listed on an objection, identification of the lead objector (verification of the identity of the lead objector shall be provided upon request); 4) the name of the proposed project, the name and title of the Responsible Official, and the name(s) of the National Forest(s) and/or Ranger District(s) on which the proposed project will be implemented; and 5) a description of those aspects of the proposed project addressed by the objection, including specific issues related to the proposed project if applicable, how the objector believes the environmental analysis or draft decision specifically violates law, regulation, or policy; suggested remedies that would resolve the objection; supporting reasons for the reviewing officer to consider; and 6) a statement that demonstrates connection between prior specific written comments on the particular proposed project or activity and the content of the objection.